

Bhikkhu Pesala is the author of www.aimwell.org and the Spiritual Director of the Association for Insight Meditation, which he set up in 1995 with the help of Christine Fitzmaurice and David Glendinning.

His first contact with Buddhism came through meeting two meditators who had practised the U Ba Khin meditation method with Sri Goenka in India. After an intensive ten-day retreat with Mr John Coleman, the author of »» “ [A Quiet Mind](#) ,” he resolved to dedicate his life to the practice of insight meditation .

He ordained in 1979 with Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw as his preceptor, and Chanmyay Sayādaw U Janaka as the examiner. Later the same year, he went to practise intensive meditation for six months at Mahāsi Yeikthā in Rangoon. Altogether, he has been to Burma four times to practise meditation under senior disciples of Mahāsi Sayādaw, especially Chanmyay Sayādaw U Janaka.

He has edited many books by Mahāsi Sayādaw, Ledi Sayādaw, and other Buddhist monks and scholars. He has worked tirelessly for many years to promote the systematic approach to insight meditation taught by the late Mahāsi Sayādaw.

Bhikkhu Pesala has had to endure all kinds of difficulties over the years due to his wish to adhere strictly to the Vinaya rules, as practised by his most venerable preceptor. Many monks nowadays do not observe even the basic training rules for bhikkhus; they regard the monastic training as impractical in the modern world. Bhikkhu Pesala has opposed this lax and negative attitude throughout his life as a monk, and urges lay supporters to take a more active role in protecting the Buddha’s Dispensation from further decline.

Those who are unwilling to follow the training are causing the disappearance of the true Dhamma. The training rules were laid down by the Omniscient Buddha to preserve the sāsana for future generations. They were designed to protect a monk’s spiritual growth and long-term happiness, not to make life more difficult and painful than it is already. One needs faith to inspire faith in others.

The essential teaching of the Buddha is just the Four Noble Truths and the last of these is the Noble Eightfold Path. This path comprises morality, concentration, and wisdom. More than 2,500 years have passed since the time of the Buddha, and during this long time many traditional ceremonies and rituals have become embedded so deeply that it is difficult to see the original teachings.

There is only one way to remove suffering and that is to remove its causes, which are craving and ignorance.

No Offence

150. Those monks who explain what is no offence as an offence work for the harm, unhappiness, and loss of gods and men. They make much demerit and cause the disappearance of the true Dhamma.

151. Those monks who explain what is an offence as no offence ...

152-9. Those monks who explain what is a light offence as a heavy offence ... a heavy offence as a light offence ... a gross offence as not a gross offence ... a not gross offence as a gross offence ... a partial offence as a complete offence ... a complete offence as a partial offence ... a curable offence as incurable ... an incurable offence as curable ... work for the harm, unhappiness, and loss of gods and men. They make much demerit and cause the disappearance of the true Dhamma.

160-1. Those monks who explain what is no offence/an offence as no offence/an offence, work for the welfare, happiness, and benefit of gods and men. They make much merit and preserve the true Dhamma.

162-9. Those monks who explain a light offence as a light offence ... work for the welfare, happiness, and benefit of gods and men. They make much merit and preserve the true Dhamma.

(A.i.150-169)

Not Dhamma

140. Those monks who explain what is not Dhamma as not Dhamma, work for the welfare, happiness, and benefit of gods and men. They make much merit and preserve the true Dhamma.

141. Those monks who explain what is Dhamma as Dhamma, work for the welfare, happiness, and benefit of gods and men. They make much merit and preserve the true Dhamma.

142-9. Those monks who explain not Vinaya as not Vinaya, Vinaya as Vinaya, what was not said by the Tathāgata as not said by him, what was said by him as said by him, what was not practised by him as not practised by him, what was practised by him as practised by him, what was not laid

down by him as not laid down by him, what was laid down by him as laid down by him, work for the welfare, happiness, and benefit of gods and men. They make much merit and preserve the true Dhamma.

(A.i.140-149)

Ordination, Oakenholt, June 1979



Front Row: Ven Nyānaponika, Ven Piyatissa, Ven Rewata Dhamma, Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw (seated), Sayādaw U Janaka, U Aggadhamma, U Myat Saw (the

owner of Oakenholt), and two temporary monks Bhikkhu Pesala is at the far right of the middle row.

What Happened to Oakenholt?

[Oakenholt Buddhist Centre](#) was sold soon after the owner passed away. It is now a retirement home. It pleases me that the elderly can enjoy the peaceful surroundings that we did all those years ago. May the residents discover an interest in meditation during their final years.

Going Forth into the Holy Life



**Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw with Ajahn Chah,
Ajahn Sucitto, Ajahn Nānadhara, and Ven.
Hammalawa Saddhātissa**

**Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw with Monks and
Lay Meditators**



Back Row: Dave Ashcroft, Mrs Aung's 2 sons,
Jurgen, Jerry Rollason (artist of Ajahn Chah's
portrait at Chithurst), Dr Michael Clark, Roy

Brabant-Smith, Burmese Kappiya, John Woodfine (Ajahn Kāruniko), 3 unknown, Mr Dennison.

Monks: Unknown, Ven Dhammawiranātha, Rob Johnson, U Aggadhamma, Mahāsi Sayādaw, Sayādaw U Janaka, 3 temporary monks, Ajahn Ñānadhara (Laos), U Khin (BBC), U Pesala.

Front Row: 2 Tibetan nuns, unknown, Mrs Aung's 2 daughters, hidden, unknown, Mrs Khin, Joan Hamze, Mrs Aung, Mrs Ruth Dennison, Abhiññāni, 6 unknown.

Books:

An Introduction to Buddhism

An Introduction to Meditation

An Explanation of Kamma

An Explanation of Rebirth

Porisada - The Man-Eater

Where Have You Come From

The Way Down To Hell Is Easy

The Power Of Love

What Is Nibbana

The Debate Of King Milinda

An Exposition Of The Mangala Sutta

An Exposition Of The Metta Sutta

An Exposition Of The Dhammacakka Sutta

The Nature Of Illusion

A Precious Human Rebirth

Money Makes The World Go Round

The Heart Of Buddhism

Ethical Dilemmas

The Five Workers

(all the books above may be read online at [AIM Website](#)
or in the Library section)